

Sine-breech was fain to hire a drummer of the Guards as reinforcement. Hostilities were not, however, continuous; every now and then both sides indulged in armistice feasts of oysters and lobsters, gin and porter, at which Beddoes would dance or give dramatic recitations. Another prank of his was to purloin all the fire-irons from the kitchen of the preacher's house, so that the infuriated cook went about cursing in a vain search for his pokers, tongs, and shovels; which were mysteriously restored to him at midnight, tied round the neck of Beddoes' fag, who was himself tied to the door-knocker with a resulting din, as the little boy struggled there, like a dozen coal-scuttles falling downstairs.

The same familiar imp of insubordination attended Beddoes to Pembroke College, Oxford, where he treated his fellows with cold aloofness and the college authorities, by Sevan's account, with 'acourse of studied impertinence*.

On one occasion, we are told, a lecturer, tired of seeing him sitting and glowering in complete inattention, exclaimed: 'I wish you would at least cut your book, Mr. Beddoes.' At once the young man rose, walked out, and returned with the largest butcher's cleaver money could buy, with which he proceeded to do as requested.

The ensuing uproar brought the lecture to an untimely end. Few, again, will forget that deadly stab, that poisoned jewel five words long', in one of his

Oxford letters:
'Mr. Milman (our poetry professor) has made
me quite
unfashionable here by denouncing me as
"one of a vil-
lainous school". *I wish him another son.*⁹

Such things are trivial, no doubt. But only
in such
glimpses does Beddoes loom upon us, like a
red-hot
fogbound sun, out of the mists which have
engulfed for
ever the secrets of his inner life. We catch
sight again of
the young poet, with his strange physical
resemblance to